

Message Text

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43

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 AID-05 PC-01 /069 W
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R 101330Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY ACCRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6714

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

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E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PGOV PINT GH

SUBJ: ACHEAMPONG FOR PRESIDENT?

REF: ACCRA A-51 OF MAY 23, 1974

1. AS MENTIONED IN REFAIR, REPORTS HAVE BEEN CIRCULATING FOR OVER A YEAR THAT GHANA'S HEAD OF STATE AND CHAIRMAN OF THE NATIONAL REDEMPTION COUNCIL, COL I.K. ACHEAMPONG, PLANNED TO CHANGE HIS TITLE TO PRESIDENT OF GHANA.

2. IN RECENT WEEKS, HOWEVER, DISCUSSION HAS INTENSIFIED, AND SEVERAL TRIAL BALLONS HAVE BEEN SENT UP IN THE LOCAL PRESS. THESE APPEAR OSTENSIBLY AS APPEALS FROM EDITORS AND TRIBAL CHIEFS AROUND THE COUNTRY CALLING FOR THE CHANGE, AS THE PRESENT TITLE IS UNNECESSARILY AWKWARD AND GHANA IS, AFTER ALL, A REPUBLIC AND REPUBLICS ARE TYPICALLY HEADED BY PRESIDENTS. THE CHANGE NOW APPEARS IMMINENT. MARCH 10 ACCRA PRESS QUOTES LTCOL R.J.A. FELLI, COMMISSIONER FOR ECONOMIC PLANNING, AS SUPPORTING THE CHANGE OF TITLE. THIS LENDS OPEN OFFICIAL SANCTION TO THE CAMPAIGN, AS FELLI WOULD BE UNLIKELY TO MAKE A PUBLIC COMMENT ON THE MATTER WITHOUT INSPIRATION FROM ACHEAMPONG

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AND ACQUIESCENCE OF HIS NRC COLLEAGUES.

3. BECOMING PRESIDENT OF GHANA WOULD BE BOTH A SYMBOLIC AND A REAL STEP UP FOR ACHEAMPONG, PUTTING HIM ON A LEVEL WITH NKRUMAH IN THE MINDS OF THE PEOPLE AND OPENING A CONSIDERABLE DISTANCE BETWEEN HIM AND HIS COLLEAGUES ON THE NATIONAL REDEMPTION COUNCIL. INCIDENTALLY (OR PERHAPS NOT), IT WILL ALSO BE A DEMONSTRATION OF GHANA MAKING A POLITICAL MOVE AHEAD OF GOWON OF NIGERIA FOR A CHANGE.

4. TIMING OF MOVE, IF INDEED IT TAKES PLACE, IS UNCERTAIN, AS THERE ARE NO PROMINENTLY AUSPICIOUS DATES ON THE NEAR HORIZON.
BLACK

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